

# YOUTH SERVICES POLICY

<b>Title:</b> FAST Track Program <b>Next Annual Review Date:</b> 09/20/2012	<b>Type:</b> B. Classification, Sentencing and Service Functions <b>Sub Type:</b> 2. Classification <b>Number:</b> B.2.12
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<b>References:</b> Louisiana Children's Code Article 897.1; ACA Standards 2-CO-1A-24 (Administration of Correctional Agencies), 4-JCF-3A-22, 4-JCF-3A-23 and 4-JCF-3A-24 (Performance-Based Standards for Juvenile Correctional Facilities); YS Policies A.2.24 "Staff Development and Training Plan", B.2.2 "Youth Classification System", B.2.7 "LAMOD Program and Youth Stage Procedures", B.2.8 "Specialized Behavior Management Units - Juvenile", B.5.1 "Youth Code of Conduct", C.4.5 "Cell Restriction"	
<b>STATUS: Approved</b>	
<b>Approved By:</b> Mary L. Livers, Deputy Secretary	<b>Date of Approval:</b> 09/20/2011

## I. AUTHORITY:

Deputy Secretary of Youth Services (YS) as contained in La. R.S. 36:405. Deviation from this policy must be approved by the Deputy Secretary.

## II. PURPOSE:

To state the broad rules and other considerations that shall govern admission to, removal from, and extension of youth in the FAST Track Program located at YS secure care facilities.

## III. APPLICABILITY:

Deputy Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Chief of Operations, Deputy Assistant Secretaries, Facility Directors, Regional Managers, and contracted health care providers..

## IV. DEFINITIONS:

**Anger Management Lessons** - Lessons designed to teach youth to recognize angry feelings, maintain internal control over their expressions, acting assertively and how to negotiate conflict with others.

**Behavior and Accommodations Binder (BAB)** – A binder containing the Initial Behavior Support Plan (IBSP) completed on youth with a history of requiring physical intervention, as well as the most current Unified Behavior Plan (UBP) for Youth With Special Needs. The BAB shall contain these two documents for youth residing in a particular housing area, and shall be maintained in a locked area readily accessible to staff at all times. Staff shall be advised of the location, content and purpose of the binder as it relates to this policy, and shall review the BAB at the beginning of every tour of duty.

**Check Ins/Check Outs** - During this process staff will inquire about the well-being of youth in the unit which allows staff a brief glimpse into the emotional state of the youth.

**Circle Ups** - The entire group, including all youth and staff, form a circle to talk openly and honestly about something that concerns the group.

**Crisis Intervention Unit (CIU)** - A unit for the placement of youth during a period of temporary removal from his/her assigned housing unit or program location when the continued presence of the youth poses a threat to himself, other youth, or staff, or when his actions/behaviors are disruptive and/or destabilizing to the continuation of regular programming.

**Custody Level** - An assignment to one of three designations, i.e. maximum, medium, and minimum, that relates to the youth's eligibility for, but not necessarily limited to, housing assignment, work assignment, escorted passes, recreation and movement within the perimeter of a secure care facility.

**Director** - Administrator appointed by the Deputy Secretary to be responsible for operations of a secure care youth facility.

**Due Process Hearing** - The process allowed a youth when transferred from custody non-secure delinquent to custody secure delinquent without the benefit of a court hearing.

**Facility Director** - Administrator appointed by the Deputy Secretary to be responsible for the operations of a YS secure care facility.

**Family Inclusion** - All activities used to reintegrate the youth back into the family unit in preparation for release to include family counseling, family participation in multi-disciplinary staffings, parenting classes for the youth's family, phone calls, mail, and visitation.

**Gender Specific Group** - A group that focuses on education and support, and deals with such issues as relationships, intimacy, self-esteem relative to gender, sexuality, identity, trauma, life goals, etc.

**Group Leader** - The supervisor responsible for the management of the entire team in a specific housing unit.

**Group Meeting** - A meeting in which youth and staff come together to discuss issues that are important to the youth and the group, and to provide a place where youth should feel comfortable sharing feelings and ideas they would not usually express.

***Individual Intervention Plan (IIP) - Initial and Formal (IIP)*** - An initial IIP shall be developed within 48 hours of a youth's arrival to a Direct Admission Unit at a secure care facility. The initial IIP specifies problem areas, goals and objectives, and the methods used to attain them, including the role of the youth and the staff. Development of this plan is accomplished through review of the youth's SAVRY assessment risk rating, the youth's record, and is a collaborative effort between the Case Manager and the youth.

The formal IIP is further developed within seven (7) working days of receipt of the contracted health care provider's Psychological Evaluation. The treatment needs are prioritized based upon a review of the youth's SAVRY assessment dynamic risk factors rated High, and in some cases Moderate, the youth's record, and any additional recommendations made by the Psychological Evaluation. The formal IIP is modified throughout the youth's stay as need areas are identified, partly based on the dynamic SAVRY risk/need factors.

***Journaling*** - An activity that allows a youth the opportunity to express feelings, concerns, experiences, successes, etc. in a healthy, structured and written way. Journals are individualized giving each individual the chance to express themselves in their own way by writing or drawing, and helps the youth get in touch with their feelings.

***Louisiana Children's Code Article 897.1*** - the law which requires that youth who are adjudicated delinquent for any of the six most serious violent crimes (first degree murder, second degree murder, aggravated rape, aggravated kidnapping, and armed robbery) must remain in a secure environment until the disposition ends. Except for armed robbery, disposition rendered under provisions of the Article must extend until the 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.

***Pre-Release and Relapse Prevention Planning*** - The purpose of this group is to provide youth with the tools necessary to develop and commit to options that will lead to a more successful reintegration into the community. It may include job interviewing skills, and how to negotiate conflict with others to prevent relapse into dysfunctional behavior.

***Reintegration/Transition Plan*** - A written plan prepared by the youth's assigned Case Manager, which identifies follow-up services needed by the youth upon release to facilitate a successful transition and reintegration into the community, and that is coordinated with the Regional Office to be used in completing the aftercare plan.

***Thinking for a Change (T4C)*** - A group designed to teach youth serving short term sentences concepts of self-worth, discipline and respect through a combination of therapeutic models of learning and social skills.

***Unified Behavior Plan (UBP)*** - A plan to address the specific needs of youth with Mental Retardation. It provides staff with information on specific needs the youth may have and gives suggestions on how to accommodate those needs.

***Victim Awareness Classes*** - Classes to assist youth with exploring the impact of their behavior on others, to develop empathy for victims, to develop strategies for preventing victimization, and to understand the need for accountability.

**V. POLICY:**

It is the Deputy Secretary's policy that the FAST Track Program shall consist of two (2) phases. The 90-day secure care phase shall provide youth with intensive programming to address their needs and to prepare them for release, thereby reducing their length of stay in a secure care facility. The second phase shall consist of a 90 day home reintegration.

**VI. GENERAL**

Suggested revisions to this policy or the FAST Track Program description shall be submitted for discussion to the DAS/Facilities, the Director of Treatment and Rehabilitation, and the Chief of Operations for review. Revisions shall be submitted in accordance with YS Policy No. A.1.1(c).

**VII. SECURE CARE PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:**

A. The goal and objective of the FAST Track Program is to increase the youth's social skills for effectively addressing conflict and problems in daily living within a 90-day program, thereby reducing their length of stay in a secure care facility. To accomplish this, the Unit Management Team shall provide structured programming to include:

- 1) Thinking for a Change (T4C);
- 2) Gender Specific Group;
- 3) Victim Awareness;
- 4) Anger Management;
- 5) Pre-Release and Relapse Prevention Programming;
- 6) Individual Counseling;
- 7) Group Process Meetings and Circle Ups;
- 8) Utilizing Check Ins/Check Outs;
- 9) Family Counseling and Inclusion;
- 10) Incentive Program;
- 11) Journaling;
- 12) Community Reintegration; and
- 13) Completion of a Reintegration/Transition Plan

B. Prior to admittance to the FAST Track Program, an initial IIP and initial Reintegration/Transition Plan [Refer to YS Policy B.2.1(b)] shall be completed and entered in JETS prior to the youth's transfer from Direct Admission to his assigned housing unit. A hard copy of the signature page shall be filed in the youth's Master Record under Clip II.

- C. Within seven (7) working days of the youth's arrival to the program, a multi-disciplinary team staffing shall be convened to review the initial Individual Intervention Plan (IIP), and the initial Reintegration/Transition Plan, to discuss core issues and needs, and to review educational needs.
- D. Within 45 days, another multi-disciplinary team staffing shall be held to determine the youth's current custody level, progress, and to update the Reintegration/Transition Plan, and IIP. Other multi-disciplinary staffings may be held as needed to address possible removal or extension in the program.
- E. All documents shall be entered in JETS within three (3) working days. Only the hard copy signature page shall be filed in the youth's Master Record under Clip II.

**VIII. PROCEDURES FOR SECURE CARE:**

**A. Admission Criteria**

- 1. Must be a first time offender in secure care, or have a recommendation from Community Based Services (CBS) or the Court of Jurisdiction prior to admission.
- 2. Have a minimum of 180 days remaining on their disposition upon arrival into the program, or have a court recommendation.
- 3. Must be functionally stable (a youth who is not aggressive, not a threat to the safety of the unit, and is not currently experiencing any current symptoms of a psychotic disorder).
- 4. Be medically stable.
- 5. Have intellectual functioning at a minimum of a measured Full Scale IQ of 70, unless his/her functional adaptive behavior overrides intellectual deficits.

**B. Exclusion Criteria**

- 1. Youth who have been identified by the team to need intensive sex offender treatment.
- 2. Youth who are adjudicated for a violation under Louisiana Children's Code Article 897.1.
- 3. Youth who have a current active detainer upon admission.
- 4. Youth who have pending juvenile or adult charges upon admission.
- 6. Youth deemed by the assessment team not to be appropriate for the program.

**C. Removal Criteria**

1. Physical assault on staff or another youth with malicious intent to harm.
2. Possession of contraband that is a serious threat to youth or staff safety (i.e., knife, fashioned weapon, drugs, etc.).
3. Escape or attempted escape.
4. Commits a misdemeanor or felony grade offense (i.e., cell phone) while in the program.
5. Failure to participate in the treatment components of the program after all attempts to engage the youth have been made.
6. Excess of 90 days in the program (i.e., waiting for a court date, etc.). This does not include youth who have been extended in the program for treatment reasons.
7. Request by the youth for removal from the program approved by the parent/guardian and treatment team.

In order for a youth to be removed from the program for any of the above criteria, a multi-disciplinary staffing shall convene to review or make recommendations for removal. A youth has a right to Due Process and can appeal the removal recommendation by the multi-disciplinary team by completing a Notice of Transfer form provided by the Program Manager/Case Manager. (The Notice of Transfer Form is available in JETS.) The youth's appeal of the removal recommendation shall be forwarded to the Facility Director/designee for approval. The Facility Director/designee shall have 48 hours to approve or deny the recommendation from the multi-disciplinary team. Upon approval of the recommendation for removal, the facility shall send written notification to the court, the youth's attorney of record, the youth's parent/guardian, and the Regional Office. A copy of the letter shall be placed in the youth's Master Record, under Clip VIII.

**D. Extension Criteria**

If a youth is temporarily removed from the program (Crisis Intervention Unit, infirmary, etc.), he shall be extended in the program for the number of days he was removed.

When a youth is not making progress due to lack of motivation or behavior problems and all remedial efforts have failed, the youth's stay in the program may be extended for 30 days. The Unit Management Team shall convene a multi-disciplinary team staffing regarding the youth's extension. A Summary of Staffing form is completed and placed in JETS within three (3) days and the PPO/J shall update the court on the youth's progress in the program.

**E. Successful Completion Without Court Release**

For any youth who has successfully completed the program but is not released by the court and denied a Modification of Disposition, a multi-disciplinary team staffing shall convene once a week to decide the best course of treatment for the youth. The team shall convene to consider a continuation in the program, placement in a non-secure facility, or placement in an approved OJJ setting.

**IX. ACCESSIBILITY:**

Youth assigned to the FAST Track Program shall have access to the same Services as other youth to include:

- 1) Medical
- 2) Counseling
- 3) Recreation
- 4) Religious Services
- 5) Educational
- 6) Barber Services
- 7) Mental Health
- 8) Visitation
- 9) Legal Services
- 10) Access to Courts
- 11) Telecommunications

**X. SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS:**

Any specific accommodations a youth in the program may require due to special needs such as, diagnosis of mental health or medical concern requiring specific medication for treatment, shall be listed in the Behavior and Accommodations Binder (BAB) in the youth's assigned housing unit. The BAB shall direct staff to adhere to the youth's needs. The accommodations may include a Unified Behavior Plan (UBP) developed by the contracted health care provider and YS staff in a multi-disciplinary team staffing for youth diagnosed with Mental Retardation (MR), which specifically lists needs and suggested staff interventions.

**XI. PROCEDURES FOR HOME REINTEGRATION:**

- A. All youth who complete the 90-day secure care phase of the FAST Track Program shall be reassigned to the non-secure reintegration phase. Youth may either be discharged after successfully completing the 90-day secure care phase, or shall be ordered by the court to complete the additional 90 day home reintegration phase, while remaining in OJJ custody. The youth shall be advised in writing by the Probation and Parole Officer/Juvenile (PPO/J) at the 24-hour contact, that violating the terms of the Reintegration/Transition Plan could result in their immediate return to the secure care Fast Track Program for up to 30 days, or reassigned to another secure care facility to complete their sentence. The youth shall be given a copy of this notice, and documentation shall be recorded in the youth's Case Narrative and the Reintegration/Transition Plan in JETS.
- B. If the youth successfully completes the 90-day home reintegration phase and is living at home, the PPO/J shall submit a Motion to Modify or a Release Order to the court to either parole or discharge the youth. Documentation of the recommendation shall be recorded in JETS, and a certified copy shall be placed in the youth's case record. Youth in residential placement shall remain in YS custody.
- C. Youth who violate their Reintegration/Transition Plan or who are charged with nonviolent misdemeanor offenses may be returned to the secure care FAST Track Program for up to 30 days. Before a youth is returned to the secure care FAST Track program, all sanctions such as electronic monitoring, more restrictive curfew or a short confinement in detention shall be imposed.
- D. If after staffing the case, it is determined that the youth shall return to the secure care FAST Track Program, the PPO/J shall prepare a written report approved by the PPJ/S, detailing the specific violations which necessitated the youth's return and his behavior since his initial reassignment. A copy of the report shall be forwarded prior to the youth returning to the secure care facility or shall accompany the youth upon admittance to the facility. Under emergency circumstances, a youth may be returned without the written report with the understanding that the written report shall be completed the next working day and forwarded to the Facility Director.
- E. The youth shall be advised in writing by the PPO/J of the reason(s) he is being returned to secure care FAST Track Program, and shall be provided a Due Process Hearing in accordance with YS Policy B.2.1. The reason for the youth's return to secure care and the youth's response shall be documented in JETS, and a copy filed in the youth's Master Record, under Clip VI.



- F. Before returning a youth to the secure care FAST Track Program, the Regional Manager/designee shall contact Central Office to arrange for the youth's return. The Facility Director/designee shall be advised of the nature of the violations which necessitated the return. No youth shall be returned to secure care FAST Track without the prior consent of the Facility Director/designee.
- G. Youth returned to the FAST Track Program for technical violations, shall be reassessed by facility staff within five (5) days of their return. The PPO/J shall contact the facility staff within the five (5) days to discuss the length of time the youth shall remain in the facility. Under usual circumstances, the youth may remain in the facility up to 30 days. The Regional Manager shall be notified in writing by the Facility Director when the youth shall be returned to CBS.

The youth may be returned to CBS and continue to be supervised under the conditions of the initial Reintegration/Transition Plan. If there are substantial changes in the conditions of the youth's release, a new Reintegration/Transition Plan must be completed, signed by all parties, and updated in JETS within 10 days of leaving the secure care facility. A hard copy of the signatures page shall be maintained in the youth's case record.

- H. For repeated and/or serious disciplinary violations or refusal to comply with the secure care Fast Track Program requirements, a youth may be removed from FAST Track, and reassigned to another facility to complete his remaining sentence.
- I. A youth may be returned to the secure care FAST Track Program for a second time, ONLY with the approval of both the Facility Director and Regional Manager.

## **XII. STAFF DEVELOPMENT:**

- A. The FAST Track Unit Management Team Leader shall be responsible for the supervision and ongoing staff development of the secure care FAST Track Team for at least one (1) hour each week through Weekly Team Meetings or other structured training opportunities. FAST Track staff shall attend all relevant staff development training\activities provided by YS.
- B. The Regional Manager/designee shall be responsible for ongoing staff development of the non-secure FAST Track responsibilities stated in this policy.

**XIII. QUALITY ASSURANCE:**

**A. Secure Care Responsibilities**

1. The secure care planning and evaluation process of the FAST Track Program is ongoing, with methodology's including monitoring of data collected through monthly and quarterly assessments, and improvement measures. Actions are taken as a result of information obtained through these activities. Some of the activities to ensure such include:
  - a) Ongoing JETS and Master Record reviews at the Unit level; and
  - b) Ongoing Staff Training and Development.
2. The Facility Director/designee and or Group Leader are responsible for evaluating progress towards attainment of the program goals on an annual basis. An annual report shall be submitted to the DAS/Facilities, the Director of Treatment and Rehabilitation, and the Chief of Operations by January 15th.

**B. Central Office Responsibilities**

1. Quarterly Program Audits of the secure care facilities shall be conducted by Central Office.
2. A written report documenting all findings and recommendations for improvement shall be forwarded to the Facility Director/designee and Central Office Executive staff.

**C. Non-Secure Responsibilities**

The non-secure component of the FAST Track Program shall be monitored annually by Central Office. JETS and Case Record reviews of the following actions to ensure compliance shall include:

1. Reintegration/Transition Plan Agreement completed;
2. Monthly contacts with the youth per policy;
3. Reintegration violations dealt with appropriately;
4. Technical violations dealt with appropriately; and
5. Recommendations to Modify or Release Orders.